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PLANNING FOR REGIONAL RENEWAL

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Abstract

Integrated regional planning can help shape the social and physical renewal required to respond to current rapid change. Decision-taking can be devolved, participation promoted, regional networks of production and culture developed, coherent planning and servicing of settlements introduced beyond local government boundaries, and resource consumption and pollution controlled. Examples of success include regions in Europe and North America based on cultural self renewal, inclusive creativity, economic vitality and communication, self sustaining environmental quality and the empowering effects of participatory governance. Their planning can draw on a wide range of well established regional methods, ranging from long established central place theory to ideas of wholeness recently developed by Christopher Alexander (2002). Well established practices of advocacy, voluntarism, institutional innovation and regular evaluation can be linked to build the regional consciousness and institutions required to implement these solutions.

INTRODUCTION: THE REVIVAL OF INTEREST IN REGIONS AND REGIONALISM

At the same time that people's daily lives and their impacts are being spread across ever wider regions, public confidence in the capacity of national and state governments to manage these changes is being eroded. Increased scepticism about the beneficence of central control is fuelling doubts about government's willingness and capacity to respond to the concerns of diversifying electorates (Sampson, 2004; Carr, 2006). In Europe, Australasia and parts of North America, this combination of

proliferating problems and institutions which have not yet evolved to meet these challenges has refocused attention on the potentially mediating roles of regionalism and regional planning. Legislators in several Australian States, for instance, have recently enacted or publicly advocated major regional reforms (Queensland Government Office of Urban Management, 2005; Carr, 2006; Ogilvie, 2006), influenced by leading practice overseas, specifically in the European Union (Commission of the European Communities, 1996); United Kingdom (Office of Deputy Prime Minister, 2002a, 2002b); Canada (British Columbia, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 2000); parts of the USA (Howe, Abbott and Adler, 2004) and New Zealand (NZ Government, 1993). In Australasia, practitioners have added their voices in support (Planning Institute of Australia, 2004; Spiller, 2005, 2006; Cameron, Grant Smith and Johnson, 2005; Kerry, 2005; Douglass, 2006). Informed public opinion has often played its role in maintaining the momentum of this discussion (Spearritt, 2003; Heywood, 1997; Heywood, Baker and Bajracharya, 2004; Day, 2005).

The causes of these developments are not hard to find. On the one hand, the mounting scale and scope of impacts of new development are shifting the size of “problem spaces” which demand unified analysis and management upwards away from the effective control of local government. On the other, the decentralizing effects of improvements in modern information and communications technology and mass transport are shifting the potential location of the decision points downwards away from state capitals towards the actual action points in regional “solution spaces”. A regional middle ground is thus emerging as a possibility. This paper explores the nature and reasons for these changed conditions, identifies a range of currently promising responses, and concludes by developing a fourfold path towards sustainable regional planning systems to meet these challenges of renewal. The aim is

to produce a framework for effective planning in contexts where rapid change is not only the norm, but the realistic long term prospect- where in short, we shall have to continue to navigate in increasingly choppy waters.

In this case, definitions are important because unlike states and local governments, regions may not have a legislated statutory extent, and are often initially designated for particular purposes at particular times. This flexibility is both strength in responding to current conditions, and a weakness in the absence of powers to implement actions and reforms. For the purposes of this paper, regions are defined as units smaller than a state and larger than a single local government which have been defined for some specific purposes on the basis of some combination of geographical, socio-economic or political criteria or objectives. For planning regions, these purposes focus on the development of integrated policies to develop and manage available physical, human and financial resources to solve problems and fulfil objectives. It follows from this that different functions and concerns will tend to result in the designation of different regional boundaries, so that some compromises will be necessary in the interests of integration. Urban & regional geographers like Hartshorne (1961), Smailes (1961) and Green (1950) have resolved this difficulty in the form of the Community of Interest or Nodal Region which contains both a socio-economic focus and a periphery which supplies natural resources of raw materials, including air, water and agricultural produce, to that centre. This differs from the concept of the bioregion (Aberley, 1993) but is far more relevant for the purposes of managing large scale settlements and their potentially destructive impacts on their surrounding hinterlands. Such regions have the merit of possessing precise boundaries defined on the basis of flows (of journeys, goods, phone calls, etc) to centres of different orders of magnitude, while having a conceptual framework to

allow for periodic revision of those boundaries. Every lower order centre will generate flows which are drawn primarily to one higher order centre or another. Centres can be selected on the basis of the range of services and roles that they are expected to perform, and regional boundaries on the extent of their influence (Smaill, 1961). These considerations have formed the basis for successive generations of Standard Regions in the UK, whose precise boundaries have evolved in response to changing social geography, whilst their basic locations and focus have remained stable (Balchin et al 1999:94-97).

The significance of these planning regions for contemporary society is their ability to contain and match the expanding range of physical, economic and social impacts which are causing unmanageable problems for small local governments, often established in the nineteenth century. Pollution of regional air sheds, water courses and coast lines, journey to work flows that may traverse many different local government jurisdictions between home and workplace, and social provisions of health and education that serve a variety of council areas and settlements, all demand some larger scale at which provisions can be planned in an integrated way. This paper therefore first examines the pressures which are generating these demands, and then proceeds to review the responses, models and methods for successful regional renewal, before concluding by reviewing a number of parallel paths to emerging regionalism.

The Pressures and Challenges of Success

Because human agency is always transforming matter faster than it can be re-integrated into existing systems, the wholeness of social systems and settlements is continually threatened by rapid and uncoordinated change (Alexander, 2002). Regional planning therefore faces repeated challenges just to restore balance between

people and places, human needs and natural resources, and ecological health and material progress. These long standing challenges of adjusting policies to changed conditions can be seen in civilizations as diverse as ancient Greece, Easter Island between the times of its monument-building climax and European contact, and the Hopi Indian culture of what is now Arizona. Jarred Diamond (2004) has shown that failure to search for unintended consequences of initially successful policies can lead to the self destruction of success. Easter Islanders bonded by the erection of huge iconic statues can strip the island's tree cover to provide fuel to split the stones and timbers to roll the statues. Ancient Greek cities also were forced into colonial adventures to find resources of timber and cultivable land after they had stripped their own narrow coastal plains. Planning which extends over the wider region of physical and economic impacts can help to provide early warning of these results, and therefore to forestall these disastrous unintended consequences. In contemporary societies, planning regions are better able to cope with these challenges than local government areas confined within anachronistic boundaries because their extent can be adjusted to recognize new and emerging relationships.

There are two reasons why these pressures are particularly acute at present:

1. The wave-like pace of change which has been accelerating throughout the scientific and technological revolutions of the last three hundred years is now approaching a new climax with the instantaneous reach of information technology (Toffler, 1990).
2. The rapidly increasing scale of the physical impacts of technological change on society and environment is resulting in effects like global warming,

irreversible deforestation, polluted and privatised coastlines, acid rain and dying lakes (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

Underlying these impacts, the natural effects of the law of entropy are all the time destroying balance and creating disorder; Karl Popper (1972) goes so far as to describe life itself as “Negative Entropy” (Popper, 1972). This process was pithily summarised a hundred years ago by W.B. Yeats in the telling phrase “Things fall apart” (Yeats, 1981). Positive human action is therefore necessary just to ensure the continuation of today’s world for tomorrow’s children. In our attempt to foster good conditions for life, planners have constantly to design for regional renewal to re-create the wholeness that is necessary for healthy life.

Table 1 indicates how these three powerful threats to wholeness operate at the national, regional and local scales.

(Table 1 about here).

PHYSICAL, ECONOMIC, METROPOLITAN & GOVERNMENTAL ARENAS

These challenges often express themselves as problems of growth management: how to control the combined effects of mounting affluence and population growth in developed countries and how to accommodate similar pressures of a much greater nature and a far larger scale in developing ones like China and India. It is significant that governments in both arenas are now looking towards regional planning to help manage their mounting growth pressures (Queensland Government Office of Urban Management, 2005, Nanjing, Metropolitan Planning Bureau, 2005).

In the physical environment, the challenges include increased pollution of air, water and land with the need to combat acid rain, contaminated coastlines and rivers and mounting volumes of waste disposal. Consumption of scarce resources needs to be reduced to sustainable levels. It is clear that all of these achievements will require regional planning, integrating land uses and systems of transport, education, economy and social life.

All of these environmental issues have, of course, **economic** aspects, but there are also other more directly economic ones resulting from the current globalizing trends in world production and exchange. On the one hand, planning is required to create regional economies that can compete effectively on the global stage. On the other, planners must struggle to prevent their regions becoming the disadvantaged partners in an international division of labour, with knowledge and control being concentrated in the Global North, and unskilled and low paid jobs and consumption being allocated to the South. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) will increasingly tend to permeate through regional economies (Friere & Yuen, 2004). Regional politicians and planners will have to decide whether and to what extent FDI should be encouraged, managed or constrained. This will demand a regional response if wealthy international investors are not merely to play off one locality against another. Planners interested in working in third world countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa will have to consider the dangers of mass pauperization of whole regions.

The physical health of growing **metropolitan regions** is increasingly problematic. Without integrated regional planning, congestion and conflict at the core, segregated and under-serviced outer suburbs, declining open space access and loss of green belts and wedges will daily become more serious (SEQ 2021, 2002). Meanwhile local

governments do not communicate well with each other, and central government departments take uncoordinated initiatives for airports, seaports, major roads, and research and defence installations without evident concern for their huge impacts on surrounding communities. In Australia and New Zealand, metropolitan areas *are* renewing themselves, but there are constant dangers of damage to the environmental health of surrounding areas and of creating pathologies of land use conflict and unfairly structured cities which become maps of relative social disadvantage, providing more for those who already have most, and offering little to those who already have least (Mees, 2003).

However, despite the urgency of these problems, the most serious and threatening of current regional challenges are those of **governance**, with its associated concerns of civil peace, consent, consensus, motivation and civic energy. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, social and physical mobility have created tensions which have resulted in urban conflicts. Starting with the “long hot summer” riots of many US metropolitan areas in the seventies, continuing with the Los Angeles and Mumbai riots of 1992 (Heywood, 1997) and most recently in the January, 2006 disturbances in Sydney’s beach-front suburb of Cronulla, these jarring conflicts point to the need for a corresponding government response of inclusive problem-solving, participatory review and implemented reforms. All of these might be termed “planning”. However, little purposive metropolitan planning has been undertaken to redress injustices and the latent underlying conflicts remain bitter.

As well as metropolitan disorders, there are problems at the wider regional scale. As repressive central and colonial governments crumble or are toppled in Ulster, Kosovo, Chechnya, Rwanda, Aceh, Timor Leste, Afghanistan and Iraq acrid local conflicts

break out between contestants for power and positions. We cannot, nor should we, go back to the centralised terror of the cold war. Nor should we advance to an Orwellian anarchy of small groups being manipulated in proxy wars by the great powers and Transnational Corporations. Instead, we need to soothe historic conflicts by creating distributions of opportunities and resources within and between regions that are manifestly just and well judged. In many countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia, peace cannot be secured until there is widespread acceptance that there is inter-regional justice and well being. These in turn require effective and open regional planning, which integrates a whole range of human activities from housing and employment to education, health and recreation. Public space systems can help protect local rights and promote regional prosperity and culture by providing common spaces and shared access to networks of regional centres. The two greatest benefits to be won from regional renewal are the civic peace which comes from positive daily interaction between citizens, and their feelings of connection to responsive and responsible leadership.

INTEGRATING PRINCIPLES FOR REGIONAL RENEWAL

This acutely needed integrated renewal is often frustrated by existing local government boundaries and divisions of powers between different levels and departments of government. Dividing work, learning, play, movement, health, personal life and governance into isolated responsibilities under different state departments does not favour creative solutions to mounting problems (Steketee, 2006). Regionalism, by contrast, can respond by re-integrating activities in a number of ways. A brief review of these options suggests the five models of regional success identified in Table 2. **(Table 2 about here)**

(1) Self-renewing Cultural Regions

In regions like Veneto, Tuscany and Reggio Emilia in Middle Italy, Cataluña in Spain and Curitiba in Brazil, regional governments are able to build upon very ancient traditions of regional feeling and communal activity going back to medieval times. Putnam and Raffaelli (1993) have shown that the ability to cooperate and to maintain educational systems capable of achieving high levels of mass numeracy and literacy, fostered by long standing traditions of urbanism and shared activities, have enabled the regions to successfully manage unpredictable social, economic and political changes at the centre. Over a century ago, William Heywood (1904) traced the role of art, pageantry and play in the lives of Siena, Pisa and Perugia, which remain the activities, identified by Putnam and Raffaelli ninety years later (1993), and relished by contemporary visitors today. These approaches to regional success and vitality have the added advantage of enhancing liveability and the experience of being fully alive in a vital community. Developing to their fullest extent over many years, they are latent in most societies at most times and can be instigated and encouraged by programs of cultural planning and judicious public investment.

These public goods of institutions, trust and services form the basis of the associational economics which link culture, education, environment and production within the thriving settlements of the “Third Italy”. As a result, numerous small enterprises (averaging fewer than 6 workers in each concern) cooperate with each other to produce expanding streams of high quality fashion, design and clothing items which have helped to re-shape productive regional life to make Toscana, Reggio Emilia and Veneto three of the highest income regions in the EU (Regione Veneto,

2000, 2001) despite generations of political and economic conflict and confusion in Rome (Putnam and Rafaelli 1993; Balchin, Sykora & Bull, 1999).

(2) Self- Generating Creative Regions of inclusion

Many of the most prosperous and thriving contemporary regions are, according to Richard Florida (2004), benefiting from the creative and experimental activities of people drawn to their inclusive acceptance of diverse lifestyles and behaviours. He terms such people the “Creative Class”. He ascribes to them the initiative that has created the programs of invention, research and development in the knowledge industry which has generated economic growth in such alternative life style locations as San Francisco’s Bay Area, New York’s Greenwich Village, the Harvard Yard area of Cambridge Massachusetts, as well as Cambridge UK and contemporary Amsterdam. It is interesting that this was also true of the earlier seventeenth and eighteenth century Amsterdam, and before that of the golden age of Renaissance Florence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the workshops and studios of Donatello, Leonardo and Michelangelo producing the inspiration which spearheaded the city’s domination of the arts and crafts market of the day (Hibbert, 1979; Origo, 1957).

Florida is at pains to emphasise the strong link between regions’ tolerance of diversity and their capacity to attract talented individuals who will generate productive innovation. The causal links he suggests between high ratings on the Gay Index and the statistics of high-end employment growth reflect earlier patterns in the creativity and questioning of received truth in the sexually diverse social climate of Periclean Athens (Kitto, 1956, Popper, 1966), Renaissance Florence, (Hibbert, 1979) and seventeenth century Amsterdam (Fisher, 1960). Contemporary examples of such

“creative regions” include San Francisco’s Bay Area, New York’s Greenwich Village, semi-autonomous Hong Kong, Greater Amsterdam, Toronto, Vancouver and Greater Auckland with its inclusive attitude towards managing the influx of Islander people. Regions of this sort create themselves through the historically rare, but nonetheless quite feasible, combination of purposive planning process and the substantive aims of inclusive societies and settlements.

(3) Nodal Regions of Global Communications & Exchange

The concept of communication-based growth poles, relying on impulses of development generated within and between *poles de croissance*, was first developed by Francoise Perroux (1950) to provide a framework for the integration of spatial and economic development of France in its post-war reconstructing phase, and later expanded by Hirschmann (1958) to become the basis for the propulsive investment of the long mid twentieth century boom. The persuasiveness of these ideas was enhanced by the concept of “economic take-off” introduced by Rostow (1960) and the resultant Growth Centre policies became the conventional wisdom of the mid twentieth century (Friedmann and Weaver, 1979), being applied equally to develop and developing countries. These theories relied heavily on the concept of “trickle down” and “trickle out” effects to distribute benefits but did not deal with the problems of congestion at the core, environmental pollution and uneven distribution of benefits. From the beginning they failed to integrate social and environmental concerns into their economic programs.

The information and communications revolutions of the second half of the twentieth century reinforced the already strong reliance of growth pole theory on communications. Whether based primarily on physical communications like the

airports of Los Angeles, Rome, Frankfurt and Singapore, or on informational communications like Bangalore, Amsterdam, Mumbai, and London, these Communication Cities often seem to transcend their local and regional contexts and to leap direct into the powerful and privileged milieu of a global network (Sassen, 1994). Their emergence, which has achieved a new intensity in recent decades, in reality dates back several millennia to the cities of Pien and Nanjing of the Chinese Han dynasty, Imperial Rome, Baghdad of the Caliphate, and Renaissance Venice, Amsterdam and London which were all world cities both in their scale and the reach and command of their trade, rule and influence.

The latest wave of World Cities was discerned over forty years ago by Peter Hall (1966) when he selected London, Paris, Randstadt Holland, Rhine-Ruhr, Moscow and New York as templates for analysis. Since then the explosive growth of the global economy has coincided with the dramatic revolution in transport technology to privilege air, sea and informational communications as master factors in the generation of metropolitan growth. These metropolitan hubs of communication and control have become the centres of power in generating an international division of labour, with economic and physical growth being concentrated in a handful of communications nodes. Global Cities like New York, London, Holland's Delta City, Shanghai, Tokyo and Los Angeles combine the fourfold focal energy of seaports, airports, stock exchanges and knowledge and information centres. This tendency for the global settlement pattern to crystallize around communication based mega-metropolises is also well represented in Australia because of the gateway character of all the major metropolitan centres in the country. Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth are all confronted by difficult choices between amenity, social justice, and environmental conservation, on the one hand, and maximum short term growth

presented by these opportunities, on the other. The regional impacts of port processing industries and proposed “Aerotropolis” development are so enormous that they demand integrated regional planning to frame and manage the resulting growth. Otherwise this growth would threaten the future not only of their hinterlands, but ultimately of the metropolitan cores themselves, like the Easter Island and Hopi Indian civilisations described by Jarred Diamond (2004).

(4) Regions of Environmental Quality

Regions of environmental quality have a decisive advantage in the competition to attract and keep the skilled human resources on which prosperity depends. The underlying theories of integrated open space and recreational planning are well known. As early as 1945, the United Kingdom was setting aside 16% of the national area in a system of National Parks, and binding its major metropolitan plans on the basis of green belts of primarily rural land uses (Dower, 1946, Reade, 1987). Marion Clawson’s landmark contribution to the Outdoor Recreation Report for the US Congress in the early sixties (Clawson, 1960) clearly spelt out the ways in which a hierarchy of regional recreation could be matched with systems of increasingly safeguarded natural resources. Many of these ideas have been integrated into Oregon’s Greenspace Plan and legislated Environmental Planning Goals (Knaap and Nelson, 1992), Greater London’s new green wedges strategy, amplifying the long standing Green Belts (Greater London Authority 2001), other National Parks in Britain and USA; and Australia’s Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Great metropolitan regions and tourist destinations throughout the world are acknowledging the crucial importance of environments capable of attracting the most talented and productive innovators on whom economic progress depends. A systemic and connected view of

open space and environmental conservation also offers many other related advantages including the creation of habitat-sustaining ecological corridors and the reciprocal relationship between settlement and open space patterns, each bounding and defining the other. All of these benefits depend on a coherent regional planning framework.

5. Regional Communities of Empowerment

Managing and reinforcing all of these elements of regional synthesis are the crucial factors of regional governance, communication and participation. Local governments are often ideal bases for local democracy and involvement, but they are not suited to adapt to the changing scale and concerns of the major metropolis which is increasingly becoming the distinctive habitat of humanity. A level of governance is needed that acknowledges the metropolis and the region and can adjust to the changing scales, issues and political values of the twenty first century. It should be able to link the unbounded concerns of global economics, green politics, lifelong learning and cultural inclusion to the local ones of community involvement, micro credit, and local design and aesthetics.

One way of doing this is to assemble local government areas into regions that reflect the current social geography of work, home, play, and environmental impacts. This kind of collaborative approach has worked well in British Columbia for the past 40 years in a system of 29 Regional Districts grouping all of the several hundred local governments in the province (Bish, 1989; Heywood, 1997; Gunton, Day & Williams, 2003). There are long standing techniques of regional analysis (Green, 1951; Hartshorne 1960; Smaill 1961) to provide the initial basis for these regions, which can then be aggregated into integrated regions composed of linked local governments, as in British Columbia. As the factors affecting the framing of regional boundaries

vary from time to time, communities should be able to participate in reviews to select the region of which they will be a part.

Longer established regions, such as those in Italy, Spain and the Netherlands are often rather more extensive in their powers, because of their strong historical and cultural connections with the city states of medieval and renaissance times. They too have been achieving significant successes (Putnam 1993, Balchin et al 1999, Anderson, 2006). More recent reforms in Nigeria and New Zealand (with its system of 12 Regions, each averaging 5 or 6 Local Districts) have produced tiered and nested systems of regional planning and governance, which have improved land use policy and planning in both countries (Heywood, 1997).

PRACTICAL MEANS TO REGIONAL WHOLENESS

The need to re-establish wholeness

We have seen that in the current age of rapid and accelerating change, critical conditions are continually spreading beyond local government boundaries into adjacent areas. Regional planning offers both a scale and a method for framing and tackling these emerging problems. The well grounded problem-solving approaches of local physical planning can be linked to broader considerations of environmental management and regional resource allocation, which can help restore wholeness and balance between activities and systems whose health is threatened by the impacts of new development elsewhere in the region. In this regional context, actions can then be devised that move towards healing environmental damage, matching social needs with physical resources, developing sustainable economies and involving people in empowering participation.

This approach is well described by Christopher Alexander, in his most recent and highly significant series of books entitled *The Nature of Order* (2002-3). Starting from the reasonable assumption that one of the prime purposes of planning is to create environments that favour the maximum degree of life, he argues that it is possible to deduce from observation the principles of transformation which create and sustain intensity of life. The main principles are wholeness, the interaction of vital centres on which it depends, and the patterned repetition of levels of scale to support that interaction. He then identifies fifteen transformations which combine to create wholeness, enhance and enrich life, and sustain and unfold universal natural order. He argues that only planning and design that fulfil these conditions will be able to create vital social and economic systems and attractive places to foster human flourishing in a healthy world. We should therefore expect these conditions to have great significance for regional planning. Table 3 lists the transformations, regrouped for purposes of convenience into eleven composite groups, and indicates their regional applications.

(Table 3 about here)

The value of Alexander's approach is not only that it reminds us of the rich array of positive physical planning approaches we can apply to create regions of beauty, opportunity and efficiency, but also that it constantly reminds us that the purpose and point of focussing on the region is to see things whole and to create conditions for sustaining that wholeness for the flourishing of human and all other life.

CONCLUSIONS: PARALLEL PATHS TO EMERGING REGIONALISM

Regional Planning takes the wider and the longer view. While urban planning is often required to accommodate growth, regional planning is more concerned with

sustainability and interaction. Because of this sensitivity to change over time, regional planning is more committed to review, monitoring and adaptation. These multiple concerns make it inherently sympathetic to consultation and inclusion, whether in Portland, Oregon (Oregon State Department of Land Conservation and Development, 1996); Johannesburg, South Africa; or London, UK (Greater London Authority, 2000).

In the main, urban planners have not focussed on institutional innovation- they tend to be fully occupied ensuring that the present system works well to solve pressing problems without making time to tinker around with boundaries or mandate. Regional Planners, on the other hand, tend to see each region as a set of systems in a system of regions, whose relations will change over time (Spiller 2005). Metropolitan regional planning often combines both these foci of problem solving and problem re-framing and synthesis, as is demonstrated by the visionary work of the New York Regional Planning Association (Mumford, 1945) and Metro Portland and the 1000 Friends of Oregon (Knaap and Nelson, 1992; Metro Portland, 2000).

In the contemporary world where the reality of rapid physical change conflicts with repeatedly reasserted traditional values, there is an evident need for sustainable systems to manage these pressures for change. The longer view of regional planning is inherently sympathetic to institutional innovation, and the development of open-edged frameworks for consultation, validation, review and implementation. Regional planners should therefore be well suited to develop new spatial and functional boundaries to match changing conditions.

Ways Forward

Powers

For this new regional synthesis to be effective, both powers and funds will be required. Central governments need to give regional plans administrative teeth so that once adopted, they must be adhered to or officially amended. It is not meticulous detail, but structural power that is needed. Oregon's 19 Planning Goals are a good example of how beneficial this can be (Oregon, 1996). The New Zealand Regional Council Policy Statements are another positive example (Douglas, 2006). Queensland's new Office of Urban Management has been established specifically for this purpose (Queensland Government Office of Urban Management, 2005)

Funds

The other key element is commitment to funding of regional infrastructure. It is public infrastructure provision that provides the rudder for civilised societies. Without it, every advanced democracy would rapidly degenerate into a banana republic, run by foreign investors for their own purposes with sub-standard living conditions for local people. The market, unaided and unregulated, cannot provide, run or maintain safe, adequate, efficient and equitable public services, because that is not its role- it exists to promote aggregate production and consumption, and should no more be expected to provide, for instance, safe water supplies than a tidal river. The examples of this are legion: the failure of Enron in the USA, the earlier underinvestment and consequent failure of electricity supply in California, the rapid deterioration of the safety and reliability of Britain's rail system following privatisation. For all these reasons, the infrastructure plan that must accompany any regional planning process is a key test of genuineness, and a guarantee of the coordination which is required. The recent very useful SEQ Regional Infrastructure Plan (2005b) illustrates what is required, and how straightforward such a document can be.

What can we do to start the regional planning process?

Given that there is a strong case for regional planning as a tool for managing development and conservation in democratic societies, how can it be introduced? As we have seen, positive though isolated examples can be found in Canada with its well established traditions of political rationality (Higgins, 1986), New Zealand with its willingness to experiment (Bush, 1991) and the European Union with its energetic commitment to a Europe of Regions (Alden 2000). However, regionalism must always contend with the reticence of central governments to introduce new activities that diminish their own prerogatives and limit their future freedom of political manoeuvre. Regional planning may therefore be an orphan child with more admirers than guardians. Its supporters will need to combine and cooperate with each other in advocacy, voluntary action, institutional innovation and regular monitoring of regional outcomes. The relations between these elements are examined in Figure 1.

(Figure 1 about here)

First may come ***advocacy***. No organizations are better suited to this than the State Divisions or branches of professional planning organizations, who are so close to the reality of the problems. They can make common cause with organizations like the state and national Local Government Associations, Metropolitan Institutes, Councils of Social Service, Conservation Councils, Chambers of Commerce, and promotional bodies like Shelter, local universities and cultural organizations. The recent expansion of SEQ's regional planning powers, for instance, was strongly influenced by a combination of professional and media pressure, in which the PIA played its own distinguished role. Far better known is the key role played by the 100 (and then the 1000) Friends of Oregon in developing the Oregon Land Use Planning Act of 1974

and establishing Metro Portland four years later (Knaap & Nelson, 1992). These are not isolated instances. The history of regional planning is replete with them, with particularly celebrated examples in Greater London (Hall, 1989), New York (Mumford 1945), Winnipeg (Higgins, 1986), Randstadt Holland (Burke, 1966, Faludi and Van der Valk, 1996), Pas de Calais and Provence (Balchin et al, 1999) and Catalonia (Anderson 2006).

This advocacy can lead logically to ***Voluntary Action***. At the international scale, in South East England and Greater London, regional planning was kept alive during the Thatcher years (1979-1992) by the voluntary regional planning associations formed by London's local governments. Plans produced by both SERPLAN (South East England Regional Planning Committee) and LPAC (London Planning Advisory Committee) gained national awards for excellence from the Royal Town Planning Institute and maintained the spirit of regionalism that was later to make possible the rebirth of regional governance in Greater London with the 1999 designation of the Greater London Authority and Mayoralty of London (Greater London Authority, 2000).

Voluntary action has also been effective in Australia. More than 25 years ago, Voluntary Regional Organizations of Councils (VROCs) began to develop, capable of taking on pioneering roles of plan making and indeed of joint provision of services (Regionlink, 2006). This is currently happening in Western Sydney (Nicholls, 2002) and the West Burnett area of central Queensland where a number of inland shires have agreed to share key services and to make joint plans (Burnett Inland Economic Development Organization [BIEDO], 2005). BIEDO is providing shared economic planning for a large sub region with a total area approximately the size of Great

Britain (BIEDO, 2005:13). Its Strategic Action Framework (2005) shows how voluntarism can develop into institutional innovation.

There are increasing numbers of examples of genuine *institutional innovation in regional governance* throughout the world at the moment. Both Greater London and Greater Bangkok have current administrations combining an elected mayor or governor and elected metropolitan councils with powers mainly confined to plan making and transport management. Surprisingly, both are scoring major policy and public successes (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, 2006; Mayor of London, 2006). In Kalkutta the coexistence of the Kalkutta Metropolitan Development Authority and the Greater Kalkutta Metropolitan Planning Board has achieved a viable and productive division of responsibilities between innovation and regulation. Elsewhere, China has designated and developed metropolitan regional planning bureaux which sit outside official systems of government but are helping to keep the burgeoning cities manageable and productive in the face of unprecedented growth rates (pers.com. Wuhan City Planners, 2005).

However, all of these examples will require effective *monitoring and evaluation* which will undoubtedly identify major shortfalls between intention and performance. It is highly unlikely that given present national policies and powers, London will achieve its aim of affordable housing in its inner areas, and it is doubtful if China's great cities will be able to create sustainable environmental conditions in their peri-urban fringes where so much regional growth is being located. Honest monitoring of these situations could then lead on to renewed advocacy to start another cycle in the upward spiral of regional review and problem solving.

One recent example of this in South East Queensland was the impact of the honest and self critical 2002 *Performance Monitoring Review* (SEQ 2021, 2003) which contributed to public, professional and political concern which resulted within a period of two years in the Queensland Government radically increasing the realism of the regional planning powers and machinery (Queensland Government, Office of Urban Management and Infrastructure Coordination Committee, 2004).

Regional Planning is sufficiently important to the future of our society; settlements and civilization for us foster its development by a variety of approaches. We shall need to embrace at different times all of Advocacy, Voluntarism, Innovation, and Evaluation. Regions are ideally suited to be the public meeting places to integrate the different scales of environment and the increasingly varied activities of human life and their impacts. Regional planning offers one of the few well tested and developed paths to achieve social and physical renewal which is necessitated by the pace and scale of contemporary social, economic and physical change.

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TABLE 1: CONTEMPORARY THREATS TO INTEGRATED RENEWAL

<u>FACTORS</u>	<u>NATIONAL</u>	<u>REGIONAL</u>	<u>LOCAL</u>
ACCELERATED PACE OF SOCIAL & ECONOMIC CHANGE	Globalization, Direct Foreign Investment , loss of national economic control, and mass migrations	Growth of metropolitan regions and millionaire cities; increase in large regional scale investment schemes	Invasion & succession of conflicting new activities into long established inner areas; massive social and physical change
MOUNTING TECHNOLOGICAL IMPACTS	Global Warming, Greenhouse Gas and Resource Pricing Debates & Policies	Regional Resource Depletion, Contamination of land air and water resources.	Conflicts over zoning and location policies and pressures on development assessment
POSTMODERN VERSIONS OF ENTROPY	Collapse of “failed” nation states and devastated regional environments in all continents. Separatism, wars, riots & social and environmental degradation	Loss of, and damage to regional resource bases around metropolitan cities, in valley regions & denuded forest areas	Inter-group, class & communal conflicts over citizenship rights (Los Angeles, 1992, Mumbai, 1992, Sydney, 2006) & resource access and use

TABLE 2: CONTEMPORARY MODELS OF REGIONAL SUCCESS

TYPE	BASIS	CHARACTERISTICS	PROMINENT EXAMPLES
<i>Self Renewing Cultural Regions</i> (Putnam & Rafaelli, 1993)	Social capital of existing educational, civic and cultural traditions of cooperation and investment	Shared sense of values and directions with widespread voluntary associations. Evolution of networks of small enterprises based on traditions of flexible production.	Toscana, Reggio Emilia & Veneto in Italy; Cataluña & Comunidad Valenciana in Spain; Canterbury Region in New Zealand
<i>Self Generating Creative Regions</i> (Florida, 2004)	Human capital of imagination and innovation developing in a climate of openness & experimentation, supported by life style and educational choices	Incentives of diversity, tolerance and inclusiveness, supported by recreational opportunities, encouragement of migration, promotion of variety and commitment to choice.	Amsterdam 1600-1790, and 1945>; San Francisco & Silicon Valley; Cambridge, Mass; Cambridge UK; Bangalore; Hong Kong
<i>Nodal Regions of Global Communication & Exchange</i> Perroux, 1951 Hirschmann, 1958 & Rostow, 1960	Financial capital deployed to create growth centres, in metropolitan regions intended to become “engines of growth”. World Bank and “Aerotropolis” policies	Investment to promote production, consumption and exchange. A strong emphasis on transport and communication, from mid C20th freeways to C21st super airports, with tensions with metropolitan and regional planning	Los Angeles, Mumbai, Shanghai, Tokyo, London, Frankfurt
<i>Regions of Environmental Quality</i> Clawson, 1960, Aberley 1993, Suzuki, 1997	Conservation and presentation of Natural Capital to maintain regional ecology, and enhance liveability of regions for living, production, recreation, and habitat maintenance.	Conservation OF Natural Capital. Research, science and scholarship to promote and attract tourism, leisure and “sunrise” industries	Dutch “Greenheart Metropolis” Oregon’s Greenspace system; South Africa’s Conservation Parks; Australia’s Gagadju Region and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park; London’s Green Belt & Green Wedges.
<i>Regional Communities of Empowerment</i> Kropotkin, 1939,1974; Bush 1991; 1000 Friends of Oregon, 2005	Development of Institutional Capital- public participation and community activation	Human, psychological and social development and empowerment through citizen involvement.	Portland Oregon; Vancouver; Christchurch; Curitiba. Grameen Bank network in Bangladesh; Mondragon Workers self management in North Spain.

TABLE 3: REGIONAL PLANNING & ALEXANDER'S TRANSFORMATIONS TO CREATE WHOLENESS AND INTENSIFY LIFE

TRANSFORMATION	REGIONAL APPLICATION
Levels of Scale	Nested regional patterns of settlement and social organization
Strong Centres	Central place networks, hierarchies and hinterlands
Boundaries	National parks, conservation areas and urban growth boundaries
Alternating Repetition & Deep Interlock and Ambiguity	Inter-leaved patterns of settlement & open space
Positive Space	Regional spaces and activities that balance environmental resources and human needs
Good Shape, Local Symmetries & Echoes	Symmetrical settlement forms and patterns that provide equal distribution and access to facilities, central places, networks, and hierarchies
Contrast	Clear definition between town & country, differentiation of centres & edges, and areas of conservation & transformation
Gradients	Differentiated densities, graduated public access to wilderness & heritage conservation
Roughness	Tolerance of individuality, mix and choice; loosely fitting plans and broad boundaries
Simplicity, Inner Calm & The Void	Conservation of wilderness & habitats; space for focus, reflection and emergence
Not-Separateness	Regional coordination & governance; Regional Service Districts and Councils of Government

Based on Alexander, 2002, *the Nature of Order*, Volume 1, *The Phenomenon of Life*, P 144.

**FIGURE 1: PHASES IN THE INTRODUCTION OF REGIONAL
PLANNING**

